

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-02 AID-05 IGA-01 MC-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 /070 W

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R 131608Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5234

SECDEF WASHDC

OSAF/INL

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AFB

AFSC ANDREWS AFB

ASD WPAFB OH/CC/OI/YP

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 0754

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: F-104 REPLACEMENT: PIETER DANKERT'S VIEWS

REF: THE HAGUE 725

1. SUMMARY: IN BRIEF TALK FEBRUARY 13 PRIOR TO RESUMPTION OF
SECOND CHAMBER DEBATE ON GON DEFENSE BUDGET, LABOR
PARTY DEFENSE SPOKESMAN PIETER DANKERT (WHO IS ALSO
CHAIRMAN OF THE SECOND CHAMBER FOREIGN AFFAIRS COM-
MITTEE) INDICATED THAT HIS TWO BASIC REASONS FOR
ADVOCATING A LESS EXPENSIVE REPLACEMENT FOR THE STAR-
FIGHTERS THAN THE F-16 WERE CONNECTED WITH COST AND
STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS. HE SAID HE MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO A
DIFFERENT VIEW POINT IF VREDELING MADE A REALLY STRONG CASE.
END SUMMARY.

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2. SPECIFICALLY, DANKERT IS CONCERNED THAT THE 2.3 BILLION GULDERS (IN TERMS OF 1974 GULDERS) ALLOCATED IN THE DEFENSE WHITEPAPER FOR THE F-104 REPLACEMENT PROGRAM WILL NOT RPT NOT PROVE ADEQUATE TO PURCHASE THE F-16. HE ANTICIPATES THE NEED TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS "SMART BOMBS", NOT INCLUDED IN THE "FLY-AWAY" PRICE GIVEN TO THE CONSORTIUM. HE ALSO ANTICIPATES THAT INFLATION AND EXCHANGE RATE VARIATIONS WILL EFFECTIVELY REDUCE THE 2.3 BILLION AVAILABLE. HE CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDES THE POSSIBILITY THAT HIS PARTY WOULD VOTE A SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION UNLESS NATO WERE CLEARLY MOVING INTO A HOSTILITIES SITUATION.

3. DANKERT BELIEVES THAT IT WILL ALSO PROVE NECESSARY TO FIND SOME ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE NETHERLANDS GROUND FORCES TO MAINTAIN THEM AT PROJECTED QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE LEVELS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE WHITE PAPER. HE WOULD, THEREFORE, LIKE TO HOLD BAK SOME OF THE 2.3 BILLION GULDERS AS A RESERVE AGAINST THIS CONTINGENCY. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE NETHERLANDS WOULD HAVE TO START A REPLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR ITS 100-PLUS NF-5S PRIOR TO THE SECOND PERIOD COVERED BY THE WHITE PAPER (1979-83). HE SAID THERE IS NO MONEY ALLOCATED FOR THIS PURPOSE IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WHITE PAPER AND THIS WORRIES HIM.

4. AS TO STRATEGY, DANKERT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE F-5E DOES NOT POSSESS THE LIMITED AIR SUPERIORITY CALLED FOR IN CURRENT NATO DEFENSE PLANNING. HIS ANSWER TO THAT IS THAT AMERICAN-DEPLOYED F-16S OR GERMAN MCRAS FIGHTING IN COMBINATION WITH THE F-5ES COULD PROVIDE THE REQUISITE AIR SUPERIORITY. IN A GENRAL WAY HE BELIEVES THAT NATO PLANNING IS IN A STATE OF FLUX AS NEW CONCEPTS AND NEW MATERIEL COME INTO PLAY. HE THEREFORE SEES NO INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS SELECTING THE F-5E AND FILLING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR AIR DEFENSE IN THE CENTRAL SECTOR.

5. DANKERT CLOSED BY RE-EMPHASIZING THE VEHEMENT OPPOSITION OF THE LABOR PARTY TO ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE DEFENSE

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BUDGET DURING THE LIFE OF THE DEN UYL GOVERNMENT. IN ANSEWER TO A QUESTION HE SAIS THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT A MAJORITY OF THE LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, IF PUSHED, HARD, MIGHT BE MUSTERED TO APPROVE THE PRUCHASE OF THE MORE EXPENSIVE HIGH-PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE CONSORITIUM. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT SUCH A DECISION WOULD PROVOKE A STRONGLY ADVERSE REACTION IN THE RANKS OF THE LABOR PARTY OUTSIDE OF PARLIAMENT. THIS

KIND OF CONFRONTATION WAS TO BE AVOIDED IF HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

6. DCM REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT DANKERT'S PROPOSAL TO PURCHASE THE F-5E, WHILE IT MIGHT AVERT THE POTENTIAL BUDGETARY PROBLEMS DANKERT FORESAW, WOULD CREATE AN EVEN MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM, NAMELY THAT THE NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE WOULD BE EQUIPPING ITSELF WITH AN AIRCRAFT INCAPABLE OF FULL DISCHARGING THE NATO MISSION ASSIGNED TO IT. DCM SUGGESTED THAT DANKERT RETHINK THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE OF THE SELECTION OF AN AIRCRAFT THAT WAS NOT DESIGNED FOR THE KIND OF HOSTILE AIR ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ALLIED AIR FORCES WOULD SURELY HAVE TO FIGHT IN THE 1980'S. DCM ADDED HE FORESAW SERIOUS REPRERCUSSIONS IN US CONGRESS FROM THE FAILURE OF A CLOSE AND TRUSTED ALLY SUCH AS THE NETHERLANDS TO PURCHASE THE F-16 IN THE FACE OF A UNAMOUS FINDING OF THE CONSORTIUM STERING COMMITTEE THAT THE F-16 PROPOSAL WAS SUPERIOR IN EVERY MAJOR RESPECT. DANKERT LISTENED CAREFULLY, SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE US CONGRESSIONAL ANGLE, AND ADDED THAT HIS PRESENT POSITIONIN FAVOR OF A REPLACEMENT OF THE F-5E OR JAGUAR CLASS WASOPEN TO CHANGE IF DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING MADE A REALLY STRONG CASE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BUDGET, MILITARY PROCUREMENT, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, SPEECHES, F-104
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 FEB 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975THEHA00754
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750054-0619
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750244/aaaabnkc.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: THE HAGUE 725
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 SEP 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-104 REPLACEMENT: PIETER DANKERT'S VIEWS
TAGS: MASS, NL, (DANKERT, PIETER)
To: STATE OSAF/INL
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006